

weren't going out hunting like they used to or even sport shooting. So they had to create a new craving, a new appetite for a weapon. They needed to attract a new customer to new sorts of weapons. So they created ads like these, equating freedom and independence with these little killing machines.

It gets worse. Here is an ad for a new assault rifle that came out this year. The AR-15 is the weapon of choice, as I mentioned, for mass shootings. This is an ad for a JR-15, a junior AR-15. It is manufactured by Wee 1 Tactical. I am sorry to say it is an Illinois company. It is like an AR-15, but it is designed for kids—20 percent smaller and lighter. It is designed for children under the age of 18.

Look at the logos in this ad and look closely. They are the same logos that are imprinted on the weapon. They show these skulls of children with pacifiers in their mouths. You will find that same symbol on the gun that they sell.

Today, the tobacco companies are creating vaping products with flavors like cotton candy and gummy bears to hook kids on nicotine. This gun manufacturer uses cartoon skulls sucking on pacifiers to try to hook children on using military-style assault weapons. Those weapons belong not at towns like Highland Park but on the battlefield—not in our communities and certainly not in the hands of children.

Current Federal law affords the firearms industry broad and unjustifiable immunity from civil liability. What would you think if a major automobile manufacturer sold a car in this country and the brakes did not work? Should they be held liable? Few would question that. But if a gun manufacturer makes a gun that is inherently dangerous or negligently manufactured, that is dangerous in and of itself, the gun industry has bought immunity in the law at the Federal level so they cannot be sued for that dangerous product. Dangerous car? The manufacturer can be sued. Dangerous gun? No liability.

Current Federal law allows the firearm industry broad and unjustifiable immunity from civil liability, but that immunity is not unlimited. Firearms manufacturers do not have a license to recklessly peddle high-powered killing machines to those who should not have them. They should be held accountable, and, believe me, the Senate Judiciary Committee is going to look at that law.

These assault rifles, these weapons of war, are killing our kids and threatening our communities in Buffalo, Uvalde, Highland Park, and so many other places. The death tolls and the tragedies will continue to multiply until we act.

Madam President, I will close by saying today I saw our Governor, JB Pritzker, who came to the ceremony at the White House, together with Nancy Rotering, the mayor of Highland Park. I want to commend both of them for

their leadership, and I want to thank the first responders. One week ago, the night of the shooting, I finally made it to Highland Park and went through and thanked all of the first responders—the ATF agents who so quickly identified this rifle as belonging to the man who was ultimately charged. I say to my colleagues: Let's waste no time and put a director at ATF. We need him now more than ever.

And to all those who responded, gave up their Fourth of July and did what they were asked to do so many times, risked their own lives for the safety of others, our heartfelt thanks. We owe them everything. From the medical crews who turned around on an emergency basis and did such miraculous things for all the people who were injured, our thanks are there and will be forever.

But now it is our turn not just to praise those who showed courage but to show courage ourselves. Can we summon the courage to put an end to these military assault rifles and say that this is not part of any Second Amendment right in America; that these are killing weapons? Sadly, we have too many lost lives to show for it.

I will close with Cooper's picture again. This perfect little boy—8 years old—went to the Fourth of July parade to celebrate our country and be with his family, and his life will never be the same.

What are we going to do about it?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The Senator from Illinois.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 676.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Owen Edward Herrnstadt, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2025.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 676, Owen Edward Herrnstadt, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2025.

Mazie K. Hirono, Brian Schatz, Alex Padilla, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tammy Duckworth, Angus S. King, Jr., Patrick J. Leahy, Chris Van Hollen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Gary C. Peters, Elizabeth Warren, Jacky Rosen, Ben Ray Lujan, Sherrod Brown, Tina Smith.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 908.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Kate Elizabeth Heinzelman, of New York, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 908, Kate Elizabeth Heinzelman, of New York, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mazie K. Hirono, Brian Schatz, Tim Kaine, Richard J. Durbin, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tammy Duckworth, Patrick J. Leahy, Christopher A. Coons, Jacky Rosen, Tina Smith, Angus S. King, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Alex Padilla, Christopher Murphy, Catherine Cortez Masto.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 968.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Julianna Michelle Childs, of South Carolina, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 968, Julianna Michelle Childs, of South Carolina, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Alex Padilla, Christopher A. Coons, Gary C. Peters, Elizabeth Warren, Mazie Hirono, Tammy Baldwin, Tina Smith, Mark R. Warner, Edward J. Markey, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Jeanne Shaheen, Sherrod Brown, Margaret Wood Hassan.

Mr. DURBIN. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, July 11, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

HUNTER BIDEN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, on May 9 of this year, Senator JOHNSON and I wrote to David Weiss, the U.S. attorney for the District of Delaware. Now, he happens to be in charge of the Hunter Biden criminal case. In that letter, we asked Mr. Weiss a series of threshold questions that Attorney General Garland has repeatedly failed to answer.

First, we asked whether Nicholas McQuaid is recused from the Hunter Biden case. As we have said publicly many times, McQuaid is conflicted because he worked with Hunter Biden's criminal attorney before he was hired as a top position in President Biden's Justice Department.

Second, we asked Mr. Weiss whether he or any of his employees have had any communications with McQuaid.

Third, we asked Mr. Weiss whether any of his employees, not just Mr. McQuaid, are recused from the Hunter Biden case.

We asked these questions because the Biden family is from Delaware and has extensive political connections. Notably, Hunter Biden told his business partners:

I'll bring suit in the Chancery Court in Delaware—which as you know is my home state and I'm privileged to have worked with and know every judge in the Chancery Court.

Does the Biden family have connections to anyone in Mr. Weiss's office? That seems to be a very fair question.

With respect to those three questions, Mr. Weiss didn't even try to answer. In fact, the Attorney General jumped in and answered on behalf of U.S. Attorney Weiss. But calling the Attorney General's letter an answer is an overstatement. It was another non-answer—essentially just words on a piece of paper that didn't say anything worthwhile.

So Senator JOHNSON and I also asked Mr. Weiss if he has received sufficient resources and support from the Justice Department to properly handle the Hunter Biden case.

Again, no answers.

One would think that the Department, and specifically Mr. Weiss, would want to tell Congress and the American public that the answer to that question is yes. The failure of Mr. Weiss to answer that very important question adds to the growing concern and public concern that the Justice Department is pulling the punches on the Hunter Biden case.

We also asked Mr. Weiss whether he has discussed the need for a special counsel or an independent counsel to properly investigate the Hunter Biden case.

Again, no answer.

The last question is more relevant today than when it was asked because the other week a voicemail was released reportedly from Joe Biden to Hunter Biden. In it, Joe Biden repeatedly left a message about a New York Times article that involved Hunter Biden's dealings with Ye Jianming. That business associate is closely connected to the communist Chinese regime.

Joe Biden told his son: "I think you're clear."

Well, that message appears to show that Joe Biden was aware of Hunter Biden's business deals and relationships. So the White House strategy for the President to continue to deny knowledge of these business relationships falls very flat.

On July 30, 2021, and on June 28, 2022, Senator JOHNSON and I wrote to the White House counsel. We wrote about then-Vice President Biden's use of non-government email to transmit government information to Hunter Biden. The White House counsel's office refuses to answer whether President Biden still communicates government business to Hunter Biden, among other questions that we posed.

So what do we get? More stonewalling.

Most recently, on July 7, this year, Senator JOHNSON and I wrote to the Attorney General, FBI Director, and U.S. Attorney Weiss. In our letter, we asked again about recusals of Hunter Biden's case. We also noted that recent report-

ing on Hunter Biden showed more connections between him and foreign nationals—this time, Russians and Ukrainians. Those additional links further support my and Senator JOHNSON's conclusion in our September 2020 Biden report that Hunter Biden's activity causes criminal, counterintelligence, and extortion concerns.

At the time, our findings were ignored or falsely labeled Russian disinformation by Democrats and by liberal media. We gave floor speeches on March 28, this year, March 29, this year, April 5, that introduced bank records connecting Hunter and James Biden to the communist Chinese regime. The same connections that we made in our 2020 report. Those bank records have proven to be authentic and, hence, aren't Russian disinformation.

For years, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle levied complaints against the Trump administration's Justice Department for the lack of transparency. Now, why aren't those same Democrat colleagues raising this concern about this administration not showing the proper transparency?

Congress has a constitutional responsibility to ensure the proper execution of, and compliance with, conflicts of interest laws and regulations. The failure of the Justice Department to comply with these rules will cause political infection to run rampant. And, of course, that will rot the core of the Justice Department and cast a cloud over everything that the Department of Justice does.

As I have said before, the Justice Department's failure to be transparent with the Hunter Biden criminal case and recusals related to it has cast a cloud over that investigation. So I ask: What is the Justice Department trying to hide?

The American people's concern about how the case has been managed, these concerns are very legitimate.

To Attorney General Garland, to Wray, and to Mr. Weiss, I strongly urge you to clear the cloud sooner rather than later.

HIGHLAND PARK SHOOTING

Madam President, on another matter, I want to say a few words—I suppose too few words—about the tragedy that happened at Highland Park on July Fourth where seven souls lost their lives. On that day, a disturbed and troubled young man opened fire from a rooftop at crowds below who were attending that Fourth of July parade event.

Like many disturbed men before him, there was a long trail of warning signs. Police and prosecutors contacted him twice in 2019 when he was still a teen, including when he attempted suicide. We shouldn't bear to see these predictable signs anymore. I ask again this Congress to pass my EAGLES Act of 2021. This bill provides the proper training to recognize the signs of a person mobilizing to do violence and then give the opportunity to intercede before these bad acts take place.